

ALDEN HOUSE

DUXBURY
CLIPPER
March 13, 1996



The John Alden House Meeting Hall Collapses

On Jan. 15, due to the "Blizzard of 96" and the storm that followed, the John Alden House Meeting Hall collapsed. The Meeting Hall, a 30 by 60 foot structure located on Alden House property, was the main storage facility of the Alden Kindred of America. It housed many of the organizations' photographs, lithographs, tables, chairs as well as many other artifacts. In addition to storage the building was used for functions. Last year the Meeting Hall was used by the Kindred 27 times for such events as "Autumn Festival," The Annual Meeting of Alden Descendants, workshops, and many school programs and bus tours. Without the building many other organizations as well have to look for a new location to meet, such as the Women's Republicans, The Bay Players, and the Daughters of The American Revolution.

The collapsed building was discovered by Alden House neighbor Bing Gibson on Jan. 15. He called Alden House director Ellen Hagney to extend his sympathies.

"When I got the call I was in shock. The Kindred had replaced the roof and the building was inspected last summer. I never thought the building might collapse." Ellen went on to say, "It seems the weight of the snow coupled with heavy rains was just too much for the old building to handle; it went down just like a card house. The roof split and all 4 sides went out. All that is left of the 25 foot high structure is flattened."

Although many of the artifacts were salvaged most did not go without damage. Two of the largest losses were a tall case clock from the 1700's and a Ballet piano

Alden House meeting hall collapses.

from the mid 1800's. Both are believed to be beyond repair. Many photographs of early Alden reunions received water damage and several were torn. Most of the chairs and tables were lost and some artifacts are still missing.

For years the Alden Kindred of America, owners of the John Alden House property, have been struggling with the problems of office and storage space. Now with the collapse of the Meeting Hall the problems are intensified. It was hoped the organization could reconstruct a barn that was on the property circa 1885, however this building will not meet the needs of the Kindred now that the meeting Hall is gone, and new plans must be made for a larger building. The Organization is presently looking for temporary storage solutions as well as funding to repair many of the artifacts damaged in the collapse. Unless funding and space are found many of the photographs will be lost forever, and many of the programs the Alden House has scheduled this summer will have to be cancelled.

The Alden Kindred of America certainly appreciates any assistance given. Monetary contributions to the Barn Project may be donated to The Alden Kindred of America, P.O. Box 2754, Duxbury MA 02331.